



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

It was a face of infinite mildness and benevolence; not such a countenance as Gortlingen remembered to have ever seen the likeness of before, but such as one might desire to see often again. The old man played with the most wondrous power; now and then he stopped, and made alterations in his manuscript, and as he tried the effect of them he showed his satisfaction by audible expressions, as if of thanksgiving, in some unknown tongue.

Gortlingen could at first scarcely contain his indignation at the supposition that this little old man should dare to enter the lists as one of Esther's suitors; for he could not doubt that he, like the others he had seen, was preparing for the competition; but as he looked and listened, gradually his anger was quelled in contemplating the strangely mild countenance of the musician, and his attention fixed by the beauty and uncommon character of the music; and at length, at the conclusion of a brilliant passage, the performer perceived that he had a sharer in his demonstrations of pleasure, for Gortlingen, in his unrestrained applause, quite drowned the gentler exclamations of the mild old man. Immediately the musician arose, and throwing open the door—"Good evening, Master Franz," said he; "sit down, and tell me how you like my sonata, and if you think it likely to win Nieser's daughter." There was something so benignant in the old man's expression, and so pleasing in his address, that Gortlingen felt no enmity, and he sat down and listened to the player. "You like the sonata, then?" said the old man, when he had concluded it.

"Alas!" replied Gortlingen—"would that I were able to compose such a one!"

"Hearken to me," said the old man: "Nieser swore a sinful oath, that he would bestow his daughter upon whomsoever might compose the best sonata, 'even although it were composed by the demon, and played by the fiend's own fingers.' These words were not spoken unheard: they were borne on the night-winds, and whispered through the forests, and sank on the ears of them who sat in the dim valley; and the demon laugh and shout broke loud upon the calm of midnight, and were answered from the lone depths of a hundred hills; but the good heard also; and though they pitied not Nieser, they pitied Esther and Gortlingen. Take this roll; go to the hall of Nieser: a stranger will compete for the prize, and two others will seem to accompany him: the sonata which I have given to you is the same that he will play; but mine has a virtue of its own: watch an opportunity, and substitute mine for his!" When the old man had concluded this extraordinary address, he took Gortlingen by the hand, and led him by some unknown ways to one of the gates of the city, and there left him.

As Gortlingen walked homewards, grasping the roll of paper, his mind was alternately occupied in reflections upon the strange manner in which he had become possessed of it, and in anticipation of the morrow's event. There was something in the expression of the old man that he could not mistrust, though he was unable to comprehend in what way he could be benefited by the substitution of one sonata for another, since he was not himself to be a competitor. With these perplexing thoughts he fell asleep, while all night long Esther's blue eyes were discoursing with him, and the tones of the old man's sonata were floating in the air.

At sunset next evening, Nieser's hall was thrown open to the competitors. As the hour approached, all the musicians of Augsburg were seen hurrying towards the house, with rolls of paper in their hands, and accompanied by others, carrying different musical instruments, while crowds were collected at Nieser's gate to see the competitors pass in. Gortlingen, when the hour arrived, taking his roll, soon found himself at Nieser's gate, where many who were standing knew him, and pitied him, because of the love he bore the musician's daughter; and they whispered one to another—"What does Franz Gortlingen with a roll in his hand: surely he means not to enter the lists with the musicians!" When Gortlingen entered the hall, he found it full of the competitors and amateurs, friends of Nieser, who had been invited to be pre-

sent. Nieser sat in his chair of judgment at the upper end of the room, and Esther by his side, like a victim arrayed for sacrifice. As Gortlingen made his way through the hall with his roll of music in his hand, a smile passed over the faces of the musicians, who all knew each other, and who also knew that he could scarcely execute a march, much less a sonata, even if he could compose one. Nieser, when he saw him, smiled from the same cause; but when Esther's eye met his, if she smiled at all, it was a faint and sorrowful smile of recognition, and soon gave place to the tear that stole down her cheek.

It was announced that the competitors should advance and enrol their names, and that the trial should then proceed by lot. The last that advanced was a stranger, for whom every one instinctively made way. No one had ever seen him before, or knew whence he came; and so forbidding was his countenance, so strange a leer was in his eye, that even Nieser whispered to his daughter, that he hoped his sonata might not prove the best.

"Let the trial begin," said Nieser:—"I swear I will bestow my daughter, who now sits by my side, with a dowry of 200,000 florins, upon whomsoever shall have composed the best sonata, and shall perform the principal part."—"And you will keep your oath!" said the stranger, advancing in front of Nieser.—"I will keep my oath," said the musician of Augsburg, "though the sonata should be composed by the demon, and played by the fiend's own fingers." There was a dead silence; a distant shout and faint laughter fell on the ear like an echo. The stranger alone smiled; every one else shuddered.

The first lot fell upon the stranger, who immediately took his place, and unrolled his sonata. Two others, whom no one had observed before, took their instruments in their hands and placed themselves beside him, all waiting the signal to begin. Every eye was fixed upon the performers. The sign was given; and as the three musicians raised their heads to glance at the music, it was perceived with horror that the three faces were alike. A universal shudder crept through the assembly; all was silent confusion; no one spoke or whispered to his neighbour, but each wrapped himself up in his cloak, and stole away; and soon there were none left excepting the three, who still continued the sonata, and Gortlingen, who had not forgotten the injunction of the old man. Old Nieser still sat in his chair; but he, too, had seen, and as he remembered his wicked oath, he trembled.

Gortlingen stood by the performers, and as they approached what he remembered to be the conclusion, he boldly substituted his for the sonata that lay before them. A dark scowl passed over the face of the three, and a distant wail fell upon the ear like an echo.

Some hours after midnight the benign old man was seen to lead Esther and Gortlingen out of the hall; but the sonata still proceeded. Years rolled on. Esther and Gortlingen were wedded, and in due course of time died; but the strange musicians still labour at their task, and old Nieser still sits in his judgment-chair, beating time to the sonata. When it ends—if it ever shall end—Esther will be far beyond the reach of the wicked vow made by the musician of Augsburg.

#### W A R .

Man's evil nature, that apology  
Which kings who rule, and cowards who crouch, set up  
For their unnumbered crimes, sheds not the blood  
Which desolates the discord-wasted land.  
From kings, and priests, and statesmen, war arose,  
Whose safety is man's deep unbettered woe,  
Whose grandeur is debasement. Let the axe  
Strike at the root, the poison tree will fall;  
And where its renomed exhalations spread  
Ruin, and death, and woe, where millions lay  
Quenching the serpent's famine, and their bones  
Bleaching unburied in the putrid blast,  
A garden shall arise, in loveliness  
Surpassing fabled Eden.

Shelley.